$4.5 Million to Conservation Districts for Salmon Recovery

Thursday, 20 December 2007

Washington State conservation districts received funding awards totaling $4.5 million to help restore dwindling runs of salmon. These results-oriented projects are part of a $60 million salmon restoration program announced by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Fourteen conservation districts received awards totaling $4,745,409. Several other conservation districts assist other grant recipients in the implementation of Salmon Recovery Funding Board projects.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Summary of SRFB funding awards}

Summary of Salmon Recovery Funding Board awards to conservation districts

Conservation District Grant Awards from SRFB

Asotin County Conservation District
$170,219

Benton Conservation District
$91,103

Cascadia Conservation District
$570,598

Clallam Conservation District

$685,000

Cowlitz Conservation District

$212.340

Jefferson County Conservation District

$185,692

Kittitas County Conservation District

$695,469

Mason Conservation District

$30,000

North Yakima Conservation District

$240,765

Pacific Conservation District

$411,250

Skagit Conservation District

$395,000

Underwood Conservation District

$91,191

Wahkiakum Conservation District

$811.575

Walla Walla County Conservation District

$155,207

TOTAL

$4,543,980

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Asotin: Replanting George and Pintler Creeks}

Asotin County Conservation District — $52,785 — Replanting George and Pintler Creeks

The Asotin County Conservation District
will use this grant to replant the lower reaches
of Pintler and George Creeks to stabilize the banks and shade the water, cooling
temperatures for fish. Both streams are within a major spawning area for Snake River
steelhead and Chinook salmon. The 1996-97 floods heavily impacted lower George
Creek. To improve stream and riparian areas, the landowner enrolled 37 acres in

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the conservation district reconstructed the channel meander. Trees were planted in 2006. With this grant, the conservation district will plant and water 9,000 willows along the lower 2,500 feet of the meander reconstruction site. The goal is to establish ground cover as quickly as possible to stabilize the stream bank and shade and cover to stream, reducing stream temperatures. The conservation district will contribute $40,365 in federal and state grants.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Asotin: Protecting the Creek Through Headgate Park}

Asotin County Conservation District — $29,814 — Protecting the Creek Through Headgate Park

The Asotin County Conservation District will use this grant to reduce the negative effects of recreational vehicles in Headgate Park on the adjacent Asotin Creek. The district will place large boulders and fencing to eliminate access to the stream. It also will restore the creek banks by planting grass and trees. The creek is a major spawning area for steelhead. Hunters, anglers and campers use Headgate Park’s pond, which is stocked with fish annually by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The park has no amenities, including water and restrooms. In addition, four-wheel drive vehicles run through the wetland near the stream, causing ruts and leaving it devoid of plants. The conservation district will contribute $5,325 in donations of cash, equipment, labor and materials.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Asotin: Building a Bridge to Protect Tenmile Creek}

Asotin County Conservation District — $39,000 — Building a Bridge to Protect Tenmile Creek

The Asotin County Conservation District will use this grant to reduce the negative effects of livestock crossing a tributary of Tenmile Creek, which is a spawning area for Snake River steelhead. There are two pens that are used for feeding 70 cattle in the winter. Both pens are fenced from Tenmile Creek and have at least 35 feet of buffer that reduces the chance of waste and sediment entering the creek. However, the only source of water for these two pens is from a spring that runs between them and enters Tenmile Creek, providing cool water to the lower reaches of the creek. Work will include the installation of a bridge, berm and alternative source of water for the cattle. The landowner has worked with the district to relocate the majority (200) cattle to a new feeding area away from the stream and has agreed to eliminate use of the creek banks by livestock. The conservation district will contribute $6,883 from a federal grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Asotin: Saving Water in Joseph Creek}

Asotin County Conservation District — $48,620 — Saving Water in Joseph Creek

The Asotin County Conservation District will use this grant to place a pipe in an irrigation ditch and provide alternative water for livestock at Joseph Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River. Joseph Creek is in a major spawning area for steelhead. One of the things that limits the growth of steelhead populations in this area is low water levels in rivers and streams. The ditch will be piped for .75 mile, saving an estimated 1 gallon per second of water. The project will eliminate a berm and pump station, allowing water will be withdrawn on demand rather than continuously, and a more efficient irrigation system will be installed. The continuous stock water right will be replaced by alternative water to further improve water savings. The conservation district will contribute $8,580 in donated equipment and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Benton: Assessing the Lower Yakima River}

Benton Conservation District — $36,427 — Assessing the Lower Yakima River

The Benton Conservation District
will use this grant to conduct a comprehensive
inventory of the riparian restoration, fish screening, aquatic habitat needs and beneficial uses of the lower Yakima River basin. To date, salmon habitat restoration has focused on the upper Yakima River basin. This is the first step toward identifying and prioritizing high priority actions in the lower Yakima River basin. The conservation district will work with the Lower Yakima River Technical Advisory Group to prioritize potential projects, based on technical, financial and political feasibility and anticipated benefit to salmon and people. The conservation district will contribute $28,623 in donations of equipment and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Benton: Restoring the Lower Yakima River}

Benton Conservation District — $54,676 — Restoring the Lower Yakima River

The Benton Conservation District
will use this grant to complete ten small
diversion screening projects and five riparian enhancement projects, as a catalyst to future restoration. The projects will have been identified as a priority by a comprehensive assessment of the lower Yakima River basin. The conservation district will contribute $13,124.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Cascadia: Conservation Water for the Entiat River}

Cascadia Conservation District — $283,824 — Conserving Water for the Entiat River

The Cascadia Conservation District
will use this grant to abandon a leaking and
inefficient irrigation pipeline and delivery system and convert irrigation water users to wells, saving water for steelhead in the Entiat River. To create improved off-channel habitat conditions year-round, flows in the canal will be reduced, saving additional water. The Entiat Public Utility District canal system is in the lower portion of the Entiat River. This project is expected to increase water quantity and water quality, help cool the water and help salmon species access spawning and rearing habitats. The conservation district will contribute $212,760 in donations of labor and property interest.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Cascadia: Removing Fish Barriers on Roaring Creek}

Cascadia Conservation District — $122,069 — Removing Fish Barriers on Roaring Creek

The Cascadia Conservation District
will use this grant to replace two ditches and leaking
pipes and provide new wells for irrigators, saving water for endangered Chinook, steelhead, which are threatened with extinction, and bull trout in Roaring Creek. Roaring Creek is the only perennial tributary to the lower Entiat River available for Endangered Species Act-listed salmon spawning and rearing. Roaring Creek has limited water levels because of the ditches. The conservation district will contribute $25,000 from a local grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Cascadia: Restoring Keystone Canyon Habitat}

Cascadia Conservation District — $164,705 — Restoring Keystone Canyon Habitat

The Cascadia Conservation District
will use this grant to place boulders and logs in the
lower Entiat River at Keystone Canyon to restore habitat complexity for Chinook salmon and steelhead, which are endangered, and bull trout, which are threatened with extinction. Land use and flood control measures have impacted the lower Entiat River, resulting in a simplified, steepened channel. There are few places where salmon can rest, grow and spawn. The lower Entiat River serves as a crucial migration corridor for salmon. The conservation district will contribute $29,100 in a local grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Clallam: Decommissioning Goodman Creek Road}

Clallam Conservation District — $305,000 — Decommissioning Goodman Creek Road

The Clallam Conservation District
will use this grant to help the U.S. Forest Service
remove 4 miles of Forest Service Road 2931-100 along Goodman Creek, which is a tributary of Sol Duc River and home to coho, Chinook, steelhead and cutthroat trout. Crews will remove culverts, fills and unstable banks; improve drainage from the former road bed; and control noxious weeds. The work will protect fish habitat by reducing the volume and frequency of erosion. Goodman Creek historically has recorded some of the highest spawning densities of medium-sized tributaries in the Quillayute basin. The forest service will contribute $60,000 in labor and donations of equipment, materials and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Clallam: Piping Ditches in Sequim}

Clallam Conservation District — $380,000 — Piping Ditches in Sequim

The Clallam Conservation District
will use this grant to replace seven open ditches
(about 2.8 miles) with pipes, conserving water and reducing contamination of the water that then flows into Dungeness Bay. Work will include installing valves, appurtenances and flow measurement devices. A public-private partnership of the Cline Irrigation District, Clallam Ditch Company and the Dungeness Irrigation Group already has replaced about 17 miles of open ditches with 15 miles of pipelines. When completed, the entire project will save an estimated 44 gallons per second of water, increasing late summer and drought year flows in the river by about 10 percent. The Dungeness River is used by four species of salmon threatened with extinction – Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal summer chum, steelhead and bull trout. The conservation district will contribute $300,000 from a federal grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Cowlitz: Protecting and Restoring Abernathy Creek Habitat}

Cowlitz Conservation District — $103,700 — Protecting and Restoring Abernathy Creek Habitat

The Cowlitz Conservation District
will use this grant to install woody debris in Abernathy
Creek to slow the creek, preventing erosion and increasing types of habitat for

steelhead, coho, Chinook and chum. A mid-channel bar has diverted the creek into stream banks, wiping out up to 30 feet of land. An additional . 3 mile of riparian area is threatened by this accelerated erosion. Crews will place logjams in several reaches of the creek to slow the creek and create places for fish to rest, feed and hide from predators. Slowing the creek also will prevent erosion and allow the plants along the stream bank to grow. The conservation district will contribute $18,500 in a state grant and donated equipment, labor and materials.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Cowlitz: Restoring a Section of the Coweeman River}

Cowlitz Conservation District — $108,640 — Restoring the Zmrhal/Rauth Section of the Coweeman River

The Cowlitz Conservation District
will use this grant to restore a section of the
Coweeman River. The work will reconnect .1 mile of a side channel to the main river, increase the stability of 400 feet of the channel and stream bank and increase habitat. Work will include placing tree root wads and logs in the river to slow the river and create places for fish to rest, feed and hide from predators. The project will be upstream of a geologic pinch point that has created a bar in the middle of the river and several side channels. The Coweeman River has eroded its forested buffer exposing soils in agriculture use and nearly has abandoned the side channel habitat. The river is home to Chinook, coho, steelhead, chum and sea-run cutthroat. The conservation district will contribute $31,500 from federal and state grants and donations of materials and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Jefferson: Planting the Banks of Snow and Salmon Creeks}

Jefferson County Conservation District — $185,692 — Planting the Banks of Snow and Salmon Creeks

The Jefferson County Conservation District
will use this grant to plant native trees and shrubs along 2
miles of Snow and Salmon Creeks at the south end of Discovery Bay and to build fences and watering systems to prevent livestock from entering the creeks. The work will cool the water and provide different types of habitat for chum, coho, steelhead and cutthroat. Work will include building a bridge, water systems and fences to prevent livestock from entering the creeks and giving them a place to drink. The conservation district will contribute $32,770 from two grants and cash donations.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Kittitas: Replacing Culverts on Indian and Jack Creeks}

Kittitas County Conservation District — $494,040 — Replacing Culverts on Indian and Jack Creeks

The Kittitas County Conservation District
will use this grant to replace two culverts that
block fish from migrating to the north fork of the Teanaway River. The culverts are on Jack and Indian Creeks, where each intersects Teanaway Road. Both creeks are small tributaries and both culverts are 6 feet in diameter with significant outfalls, no streambed material and too steep of slopes. Replacing the culverts will open up nearly 9 miles of habitat for steelhead, Chinook, coho and bull trout. Project partners include Kittitas County, U.S. Forest Service and Kittitas Conservation Trust. The conservation district will contribute $250,000 from a federal grant and donated labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Mason: Adding Logjams in 5-Mile Creek}

Mason Conservation District — $30,000 — Adding Logjams in 5-Mile Creek

The Mason Conservation District
will use this grant to place about 320 feet of large,
woody debris on the right bank of the confluence of 5-Mile Creek and the south fork of
the Skokomish River to maintain the connectivity of the two rivers and to provide
shaded habitat for endangered salmon, steelhead and bull trout. Work will include
placing four logjams so the water naturally will scour a channel between the two rivers.
This will help during the summer, when the mouth of 5-Mile Creek normally is blocked
by sediment. Keeping the two rivers connected also will allow the cool, ground-fed water
of 5-Mile to mix with the south fork, when its summer temperatures run too high,
causing stress for fish. In extreme conditions, endangered fish become trapped in areas that are not connected to the
main river channels. This project will correct this condition
at the mouth of 5-Mile Creek. The conservation district will contribute $59,476 from a
federal grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=North Yakima: Modifying Ahtanum Creek Fish Passage}

North Yakima Conservation District — $152,471 — Modifying North Fork of Ahtanum Creek Fish Passage

The North Yakima Conservation District
will use this grant to remove or modify a
gauging station weir and concrete apron at the north fork of Ahtanum Creek to allow fish
to migrate upstream. The Yakama Nation has provided initial drawings for a passage
design. Bull trout use the creek as well as summer steelhead, rainbow and cutthroat.
The conservation district will contribute $28,083 from a federal grant.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=North Yakima: North Yakima County Fish Screening}

North Yakima Conservation District — $88,294 — North Yakima County Fish Screening

The North Yakima Conservation District
will use this grant to design, build and install a
fish screen on one of the remaining unscreened diversions on Cowiche Creek, a
tributary to the Naches River. Screening of the diversion at the Cowychee ditch will
decrease fish entrapment in this stream. The conservation district also is exploring
options to abandon the diversion and provide another irrigation source as well as
working with farmers to develop water efficiency programs to conserve water. The
conservation district will contribute $50,000 from federal and state grants.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Pacific: Assessing Blocking Culverts}

Pacific Conservation District — $79,000 — Assessing Blocking Culverts

The Pacific Conservation District
will use this grant to assess 25 culverts in the
estuaries of the Naselle and Willapa watersheds for fish passage. After completion of
the assessment, the district will complete the design, to a 90 percent level, for replacing
the top five priority culverts. The district will contribute $15,500 in donations of
equipment and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Pacific: Designing Culverts for Willapa Bay}

Pacific Conservation District — $54,750 — Designing Culverts for Willapa Bay

The Pacific Conservation District
will use this grant to provide construction designs for
fixing the top five fish-blocking culverts in the freshwater watersheds of Willapa Bay. In 2005, the conservation district completed an assessment of culverts that blocked fish migration in Water Resource Inventory Area 24. The assessment prioritized the culverts for replacement. The conservation district will contribute $15,000 in donations of equipment and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Pacific: Naselle Knotweed Control Project}

Pacific Conservation District — $277,500 — Naselle Knotweed Control Project

The Pacific Conservation District
will use this grant to control Japanese knotweed,
which is choking out native, riparian plants in the Naselle watershed. Conservation district staff and Pacific County Weed Management will use an integrated pest management approach, which includes herbicides, to control known infestations of knotweed along 40 miles of the Naselle River and Salmon Creek. This project will benefit all five salmon species within the Naselle watershed. The conservation district will contribute $49,000 in donations of equipment and materials.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Skagit: Controlling Erosion on Bacon Creek Roads}

Skagit Conservation District — $395,000 — Controlling Erosion on Bacon Creek Roads

The Skagit Conservation District
will use this grant to control erosion on Bacon Creek
roads to reduce the risk of road failures, erosion and subsequent damage to Bacon Creek and its tributaries and floodplain. Partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, the conservation district will replace culverts and stabilize ditches and fill on road 1060, and remove culverts and install rock-lined rolling dips on road 1062. Chinook salmon and Dolly Varden use this area as well as coho, chum and pink salmon, sea-run and resident populations of cutthroat and rainbow (steelhead) trout. The conservation district will contribute $70,000 in donated materials.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Underwood: Restoring Simmons Creek}

Underwood Conservation District — $91,191 — Restoring Simmons Creek

The Underwood Conservation District
will use this grant to place wood, plants and small
rocks in 1.2 miles of Simmons Creek to create additional habitat and slow the creek to reduce erosion. Work will include building about 40 structures in the river to capture sediment and create habitat, installing cattle watering systems and planting the creek banks with willow, black cottonwood and other plants. The work is expected to stabilize eroding banks, increase groundwater recharge, reduce downstream sedimentation and increase the amount of water downstream in the summer. Simmons Creek feeds Snyder Creek, a tributary of the Klickitat River and home to Middle Columbia steelhead, which are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The upper reaches of Simmons Creek are on a relatively flat plateau with deep, fine-grained soils. At least a 1.2 miles of stream is moderately incised. Erosion occurs because water is unable to spread onto the floodplain. Rapid runoff results in poor groundwater recharge and low, warm summer flows in the downstream reaches of Snyder Creek. The conservation district will contribute $23,950.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Wahkiakum: Restoring Walters Stream}

Wahkiakum Conservation District — $110,000 — Restoring Walters’ Stream

The Wahkiakum Conservation District
will use this grant to restore 600 feet of the bank
along Skamokawa Creek, which runs through a farm managed by Kay Walters. Work
will include placing tree root wads, logs and logjams in the stream to help stabilize the
bank and slow the stream, creating places for fish to rest, feed and hide from predators.
Crews also will shape the bank, plant it and add a fence to separate the farm from the
stream, improving water quality. During the 2006 election day storm, 3,000 yards of fine
sandy loam, two farm implements and several hundred feet of fence were washed into
Skamokawa Creek, burying the creek’s gravel bed and wiping out a strip of grass that
once separated livestock holding areas from the creek. The conservation district will
contribute $21,500 from federal and state grants and donations of materials and labor.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Wahkiakum: Restoring Historic Skamokawa Creek}

Wahkiakum Conservation District — $701,575 — Restoring Historic Skamokawa Creek

The Wahkiakum Conservation District
will use this grant to modify the tide gate and gate
valves to allow Skamokawa Creek to flush its historic channel, improving water quality
and allowing fish access. In the 1940s, dikes were built and a new channel created for
the creek to reduce flooding of the town of Skamokawa. The lower 2 miles of the Middle
Valley Skamokawa Creek were abandoned and the historic channel was reduced to a
250-acre watershed. A tide gate was installed at the outlet and an 18-inch pipe with a
gate valve was placed at the upstream end. During the following 60 years, water quality
has declined in the historic channel and the upper half of the channel is filling. In the
summer, creek temperatures increase and the oxygen needed to keep fish and plants
alive depletes. This meandering reach of the Middle Valley Skamokawa would have
provided habitat to coho, chum, Chinook and steelhead. Modifying the tide gate and
valves will allow for annual flushing, which would improve water quality and restore
habitat. The conservation district will contribute $150,000 from federal and state grants.

{mospagebreak_scroll title=Walla Walla: Touchet River Bank Stabilization}

Walla Walla County Conservation District — $155,204 — Assessing and Designing Touchet River Bank Stabilization Projects

The Walla Walla County Conservation District
will use this grant to assess and design
improvements to stabilize the banks of the Touchet River. Buffers along river banks are
a key component of essential habitat for Endangered Species Act-listed fish. Groups in
the area have planted 181 miles and 3,020 acres of river bank buffers. However, more
work cannot continue unless a bank stabilization program is undertaken. Banks must be
stable to allow trees and shrubs to grow and mature. This grant will allow the
conservation district to assess the needed improvements. The conservation district will
contribute $58,528 in federal and state grants and donated labor.